



California Public Utilities Commission

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News Release

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PUC AVOIDS 310 AREA CODE SPLIT

SAN FRANCISCO, October 16, 2003 -- The California Public Utilities Commission (PUC) today determined that a split of the 310 area code is not needed at this time because there are adequate telephone numbers still available in the 310 area code to provide customers and telephone carriers with sufficient service.

There are eight whole prefixes, or 80 one thousand number blocks, unassigned and available in the 310 area code. Almost 400 one thousand number blocks are already assigned to various rate centers and currently available to be used by carriers within the 310 number pool. The Commission determined that instead of splitting the area code, it should closely monitor the additional need for telephone numbers in the 310 area code during the next six months to assure adequate telephone number supplies. The Commission will further advocate its Technology Specific Overlay proposal now pending with the Federal Communications Commission (FCC), and will evaluate the success of wireless industry compliance with local number portability requirements this November. These actions could free up significant amounts of unused telephone numbers in the 310 area code.

The 310 area code split proposed by the North American Numbering Plan Administrator (NANPA) would have created a two-way geographic split of the 310 area code. The northern portion, including the majority of Inglewood and all of Culver City, Marina Del Rey, Mar Vista, Santa Monica, Beverly Hills, West Los Angeles, Malibu, and a small portion of the City of Hawthorne and Ventura County would have retained the 310 area code. The southern portion of the 310 area code, including El Segundo, Hawthorne, Compton, Redondo, Lomita, and San Pedro would have been split off to form a new 424 area code.

In exercising its delegated authority from the FCC, the Commission has found that historic industry claims of impending telephone number exhaustion were based merely upon carriers' forecasts of future telephone number usage within each area code, not their respective historical or

actual use of telephone numbers. No independent analysis had been provided, however, concerning the reliability of such forecasts or carriers' actual utilization of telephone numbers.

Beginning in March 2000, the Commission adopted various number reporting and conservation measures that collectively have slowed significantly the pace of area code splits in California. The Commission initiated the first-ever utilization study of actual number use in California (in the 310 area code) where it found 3 million unused telephone numbers in an area code that was allegedly entirely out of available telephone numbers. By the end of 2001, the Commission had completed a utilization study for each of the state's other 24 area codes. In every case, it found that each area code actually contained between 40 percent to 80 percent of the available numbers classified by the carriers as unused.

In addition, the Commission began distributing new telephone numbers to carriers more efficiently, through number pooling and other measures. Number pooling allows telephone companies to receive numbers in smaller blocks than the traditional 10,000 numbers, enabling multiple providers to share a 10,000-number block and therefore use this limited resource much more efficiently. In March 2000, California began the state's first number "pool" in the 310 area code. Today, every area code in California has implemented number pooling, operated by a neutral third-party Pooling Administrator. By allowing the state to distribute numbers in smaller blocks of 1,000, the PUC can better match the numbering needs of new, smaller companies without stranding the remaining numbers in the 10,000-number block.

The PUC is required under FCC rules to open a new area code where necessary to avoid code exhaustion and denial of numbering resources necessary for competitive service.

The 310 area code was created in late 1991 to relieve numbers exhaustion in the 213 area code. The 310 area code was subsequently split in January 1997, forming a separate 562 area code, again to replenish number supplies.

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